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Your essential daily news | WEEKEND, MARCH 17-19, 2017

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A Ground Swell time

Halifax pop star Ria Mae
back in town this weekend
for music festival
alongside In-Flight Safety,
Rawlins Cross
metroNEWS



TWO MORE

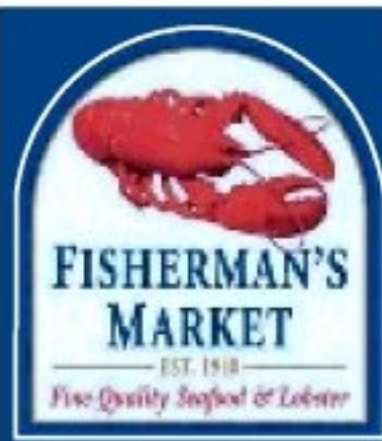


Halifax cab drivers
to appear in court
for sexual assault
metroNEWS

PADDY'S PARTY



Going Irish just one of
the five things to do in
Halifax this weekend
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Two drivers to stand trial

CRIME

Both men charged with sexual assault last year



Zane Woodford
Metro | Halifax

The cases of two different taxi drivers charged with sexual assault were in court in Halifax on Thursday.

Seyed Mirsaeid-Ghazi, who was 45 years old when he was arrested and charged last year, appeared in Nova Scotia provincial court to finish his preliminary inquiry, which began in December.

Mirsaeid-Ghazi was arrested and charged in April 2016 in relation to an alleged sexual assault in October 2015. Halifax Regional Police said a man driving a taxi in the area of Windsor and Allan streets picked up a 21-year-old female passenger he had driven on previous occasions. Police said he touched the woman in a sexual manner without her consent before dropping her off at her destination in Halifax.

In court on Thursday, a witness no longer living in Halifax testified via video link. His testimony is protected by a publication ban, as is the identity of the complainant in the case.

Mirsaeid-Ghazi has committed to stand trial, and elected to be tried by Nova Scotia Supreme Court judge alone. He'll



Seyed Mirsaeid-Ghazi enters Halifax Provincial Court on Thursday. JEFF HARPER/METRO

“The Crown certainly is aware that there is a public interest around sexual assaults involving taxi drivers.” Carla Ball

be in Supreme Court on March 30 to begin the process of setting dates for his trial. His lawyer, Luke Craggs declined to

comment outside court.

After his taxi licence was suspended pending the outcome of legal proceedings,

in a controversial decision in which provincial court Judge Gregory Lenehan said, “clearly a drunk can consent.” The Crown is appealing that decision on six grounds.

The Crown attorney assigned to Mirsaeid-Ghazi's case, Carla Ball, said outside court that the public interest doesn't affect her duty to prove the case.

“The Crown certainly is aware that there is a public interest around sexual assaults involving taxi drivers, but the Crown nonetheless proceeds and puts forward the evidence that we have to prove the elements,” she said.

In a separate case on Thursday morning, defence lawyer Laura McCarthy appeared on behalf of Farset Mohammad, 27, in Nova Scotia Supreme Court to begin the process of setting dates for a trial.

Halifax Regional Police spokesperson Const. Dianne Penfound said Thursday that Mohammad was arrested and charged in July 2016 for an alleged sexual assault in a cab in downtown Halifax reported to police in June 2015.

Mohammad's case will be back in court for a pre-trial conference on March 29, and then again on April 6 to set dates for his trial. He's elected to be tried by a Supreme Court judge alone.

Municipal spokesperson Brendan Elliott said Thursday Mohammad's taxi licence was suspended pending the outcome of legal proceedings the day after he was charged. He hasn't appealed that suspension.

HOUSING

Halifax rents spike



Yvette d'Entremont
Metro | Halifax

If you're looking for a rental pad in Halifax, be prepared to pay more. An apartment rental platform called PadMapper released its Canadian National Rent Report and found Halifax ranked as the 14th most expensive rental market in Canada last month.

That's a jump up from the previous month, when Halifax ranked 17th on the list of the top 25 most expensive places to rent in Canada.

The price of one bedroom units in Halifax increased over the past month by 4.7 per cent, jumping to an average of \$900 per month. Two bedroom rental units moved up by 3.6 per cent to \$1,140.

The most expensive rental market in Canada is Vancouver, where one bedroom units rent for an average of \$1,900 and two-bedroom units rent for about \$3,130. Close behind is Toronto, where prices continue to rise and renters can expect to pay \$1,700 on average for a one bedroom unit, \$2,160 for two bedrooms.

The two least expensive rental markets in Canada were both in Quebec. In Saguenay, which ranked #25 on the list, renters can get a one bedroom unit for \$510 per month on average, and a two bedroom for \$630.

The second least expensive place to rent in Canada was Sherbrooke, Quebec. A one bedroom can be snapped up for \$550 on average, with a two bedroom unit renting for \$710.

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5 things to do this weekend

Celebrate African food and culture, play some bubble soccer, or seek out your favourite Irish pub for St. Paddy's Day.

YVETTE D'ENTREMONT METRO

1 St. Paddy's Day

Everyone's Irish on St. Patrick's Day, or so they say. Whether you take a "sick day" on Friday, or get into the festivities after work hours, there's no shortage of pubs and places to enjoy a pint (or more) of Guinness, some good cheer or green beer alongside your live music.

2 Kick it

Bubble Soccer for LGBTQ Youth and their Allies: This Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., the Youth Project is hosting an amusing alternative to regular soccer. Players are encased in a giant air bubble while playing the sport. Open to LGBTQ youth and their allies 25 and under, the event at the George Dixon Centre is free. Those under 16 must bring a signed waiver. Go to youthproject.ns.ca/events/bubble-soccer for more.

3 For the pun of it

Join the folks at Argyle Fine Art on Saturday for an artful afternoon that includes making your own linocut print followed by the gallery's first ever PUN OFF. Open to all ages, the fun pun event runs from 2:30-3:30 p.m. The last pun standing wins prizes! Pre-registration is preferred. Go to argylefineart.blogspot.ca.



JEFF HARPER/METRO

4 Africa night

On Saturday night enjoy a "mouth-watering" buffet and performances from all parts of Africa. The Dalhousie African Students' Association, in collaboration with Saint Mary's University's African Student Society, is presenting its annual Africa Night at the Cunard Centre from 5:30-11:30 p.m. This year's theme is "One Heart with 54 Veins — Diversity Enhances Power." There is also an after party, which is only open to 19+. Tickets are available via eventbrite.ca/e/african-night-2017-tickets-32679813201.

5 Flying on Your Own

A Tribute to Rita MacNeil: This weekend Symphony Nova Scotia pays homage to the Cape Breton legend's music with vocals from the Men of the Deeps, Lucy MacNeil of the Barra MacNeils and Rita's niece Katriona MacNeil. Conducted by Scott Macmillan, concerts are Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets start at \$30. Visit symphonynovascotia.ca for more information.

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The media get a tour of the yet to be built COVE research facility on Thursday. Irving Shipbuilding is investing \$4.52 million in the Centre for Ocean Ventures & Entrepreneurship. JEFF HARPER/METRO

Millions invested in ocean tech hub

BUSINESS

Centre will create a shared space for firms of all sizes



Cody McEachern
For Metro | Halifax

The tides are shifting for a new ocean tech incubation centre as it receives an investment from the largest shipbuilding company in Canada.

Irving Shipbuilding Inc. announced it will be investing \$4.52 million into the Centre for Ocean Ventures & Entrepreneurship to help create a shared space for ocean tech research and development.

The centre, which is called COVE, is being developed out of the former Canadian Coast Guard lot on the Dartmouth waterfront, and will act as a "startup zone" for small ocean tech companies.

"COVE will bring together small, medium and large companies to strengthen the ocean economy for development and

use of advanced ocean technology," said Jim Hanlon, CEO of the Institute for Ocean Research Enterprise at a press conference Thursday.

At the press conference, Irving Shipbuilding Inc. president Kevin McCoy said the investment will help create a high-quality marine infrastructure and a collaborative space for companies to grow.

"On one side of the harbour, we have the most modern shipyard in North America. Where we stand today will soon become one of the world's most innovative ocean technology incubators," he said.

The facility will feature two deep water piers for large boats, two marginal wharfs, a floating dock for smaller boats, office space, space for shops and labs, and an incubator for a mix of small and large companies to collaborate.

"Yes it will be an incubator, but it is different from other incubators in different sectors in that there will be currently existing large and medium companies mixed in with smaller startups," said Hanlon.

The facility will also provide the resources to allow smaller startups to get ahead of the game

+ COVE

Jim Hanlon said members will be able to access:

- A world-class ocean front
- Prototyping and test facilities
- Access to world-class research knowledge
- Multi-company synergy from small and large companies at COVE
- Resources to help startups get into business with less capital investment
- Access to international boardrooms facilitated through COVE

as a way to support ocean technology commercialization.

"Capital investment at the front of a startup in ocean tech is significant," said Hanlon.

"We will have shared resources here that will enable those startup companies to get into business without as much of a capital investment, because they are able to access the shared facilities."

The COVE facility is expected to open in 2018.

IN BRIEF

Homicide of farmer added to police rewards program

The 1991 murder of a man shot while tending to his cows has been added to the province's Rewards for Major Unsolved Crimes Program.

The justice department said the province and the RCMP are offering up to \$150,000 for information about the murder of Elmer Yuill. Anyone with information should call the Rewards for Major Unsolved Crimes Program at 1-888-710-9090. METRO

ACTIVITIES

Winter season for Oval coming to end

It's almost time to hang up the skates at the Oval for the year.

The three-month winter season for the skating surface on the Halifax Common comes to a close on Sunday.

In a release, the city said over 110,000 people visited the Oval during the 2016-17 winter period.

That number is down slightly from the 120,000 skat-

ers reported for the 2015-16 season.

Parks and recreation staff will switch the surface from ice to concrete for the spring and summer season and will change the free rental equipment available.

Ice skates and snowshoes will be swapped for inline and roller skates, as well as scooters and bikes.

METRO



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Music fest rallies coastal talent

LIVE MUSIC

Ria Mae plays GroundSwell Festival this weekend



Jonathan Briggs
For Metro | Halifax

The GroundSwell Music Festival is back for a second year, showcasing a mix of established East Coast bands with up-and-coming Halifax artists.

The festival takes place from March 16-18 and is hosted by Halifax record label GroundSwell Music. After showcasing label artists exclusively the first time around in November 2015, the festival has expanded to a wider ranger of bands in its second year.

"We've opened it up and expanded our reach to bring in the best of the East Coast," said festival co-ordinator Sarah Atkinson, who said GroundSwell is focused on bringing the best local music, food and drink for



Rawlins Cross played Thursday night's festival opener at the Spatz. CONTRIBUTED/RAWLINS CROSS

the audience.

This includes pop singer songwriter Ria Mae, now signed with Sony Music, who broke through with her hit single Clothes Off. She'll headline the festival's final night at Olympic Hall, joined by local synth-pop artist Arsoniste and Halifax

"We've...expanded our reach to bring in the best of the East Coast."

Sarah Atkinson, festival coordinator

indie pop rock band In-Flight Safety.

"Ria Mae is taking off right now. She's coming back from a tour with Tegan and Sara over in Europe. We're really excited for her to bring that back to her hometown of Halifax," said Atkinson.

Mae and In-Flight Safety lead singer and guitarist John Mullane have been friends for a long time. Initially the friendship started when the two met at a local show and bonded over having the same haircut and similar clothes. The friendship continued and they've enjoyed a long-term creative partnership.

"It's the best when you know somebody has the talent but it hasn't been discovered," said Mullane, who recorded an alternate take of his band's song Stockholm with Mae in 2015.

"Sometimes people don't get the opportunity and she did. So it's a very proud friend moment. It also gives a chance for me to move out of the way and help amplify other people's careers."

The festival intentionally picked The Stanfields to headline the Olympic Hall show on St. Patrick's Day on Friday. The five-piece rock and roots band have a reputation for working hard and knowing how to throw a party.

Rawlins Cross and Heather Rankin opened the festival with a show at the Spatz Theatre on Thursday.

+ DETAILS

The Groundswell Music Festival returns to Halifax for its second year, showcasing a slew of East Coast musicians.

■ WHEN

Friday, March 17,
Saturday March 18
Doors: 8 p.m.
Music 9 p.m.

■ WHERE

Olympic Hall
2304 Hunter St.

■ WHO

Friday: Then Stanfields,
Like a Motorcycle, The
Royal Volts

Saturday: Ria Mae, In-
Flight Safety, Arsoniste

■ HOW MUCH

Tickets: \$35-75

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POLITICS

Voting boundaries conflict could result in election

A Nova Scotia political scientist says a recent court ruling on electoral boundaries doesn't necessarily prevent the provincial government from calling an election before it deals with the issues raised around minority representation.

Tom Urbaniak, an expert in governance at Cape Breton University, says the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal ruling released in January was an advisory opinion that the government had asked for on constitutional grounds and isn't binding.

The court found that a previous boundary redrawing by the former NDP government violated the voter rights section of the Charter of Rights and both the Opposition Progressive Conservatives and NDP legislature member Sterling Beliveau have since said they are looking at legal options if there is no formal boundary review.

The Acadian Federation of Nova Scotia took court action after the 2012 boundary change eliminated three pro-

ected Acadian districts.

"It (the ruling) doesn't say thou shall not have an election until this is resolved, nor does it say that the so-called protected ridings have to be restored," Urbaniak said in an interview.

Urbaniak said the ruling established that the 2012 process was flawed under the House of Assembly Act and on constitutional grounds because the terms of reference were written in such a way that kept the electoral boundaries commission from balancing various interests including minority rights.

"It put too much of the weight on representation by population," he said.

Michel Samson, the minister responsible for the Office of Acadian Affairs, has refused to divulge the government's response to the court ruling. Talks are ongoing with the Acadian Federation about how to proceed and Samson has said the outcome of those discussions will be made public.

Meanwhile, speculation is

high Premier Stephen McNeil could call an election by spring or early fall and Urbaniak said it's far from certain any potential injunction request to try to prevent a vote would be met favourably by a court.

"I think the courts would be very cautious about issuing any kind of injunction that would block an election from happening and that's because the dissolution of the legislature is a Crown prerogative ... and courts have been historically very reluctant to interfere with that."

Regardless, Urbaniak said the government will likely have to deal with the issue beforehand in order to signal that it does take the question of minority representation seriously.

He said the government's hand could be forced if there is a court application seeking corrections around how the boundaries were redrawn on legal and constitutional grounds.

"Someone could try to get a court to make a statement like that and really more firmly throw the ball into the court of the government and the House of Assembly to deal with it," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



I think the courts would be very cautious about issuing any kind of injunction that would block an election.

Tom Urbaniak, Cape Breton University

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Teen spells his way to success

COMPETITION

Student heads to Washington for national spelling bee

Nova Scotia's spelling bee champion says training he took in Air Cadets helped him stay calm in the final rounds of the provincial competition.

Theo Thompson-Armstrong, a Grade 8 student at Gorsebrook Junior High, beat out 14 other students from across Nova Scotia to win the Big Spelling Bee on Feb. 25 at the Halifax Central Library.

Thompson-Armstrong joined the Air Cadets in September 2015, and this winter he took up biathlon, which combines cross-country skiing and rifle shooting at targets.

"For biathlon, I learned how to control my breathing, learned how to calm my heart for the shooting part and that is what I did to stay calm on stage," said Thompson-Armstrong.

Because Nova Scotia teachers were working to rule,



Theo Thompson-Armstrong, a Grade 8 student at Gorsebrook Junior High, won the provincial Big Spelling Bee Feb. 25 at the Halifax Central Library. JONATHAN RILEY/TC MEDIA

Thompson-Armstrong didn't think he'd be able to register or compete, so he hadn't done any studying.

"It was just four days before the spelling bee that work to rule ended and I was allowed to register," he said. "Normally I'd have done a lot of studying

"I learned how to control my breathing ... how to calm my heart."

Theo Thompson-Armstrong

on my own, studying language and words, but this year, with just four days, basically Dad quizzed me."

The students are all provided with the same list of 1,000 words to study.

Thompson-Armstrong's first words were easy enough: icicle,

baton, stucco. Slowly they got trickier: bravura, schnauzer, pochismo, forsythia, Nachtmusik, shrieval, lahar and Uitlander.

When the pronouncer said 'galjoen,' Theo's mother looked at his father as if to say 'no way.' But his father just nodded confidently. Theo and his Dad had gone over that word that morning.

The competition has to end on a correct spelling, so when one student makes a mistake the other student has to correctly spell one more word to win.

When Thompson-Armstrong spelled larkspur wrong, his opponent left out an 'm' in 'commission.'

At the very end, Thompson-Armstrong's opponent spelled 'ultralight' wrong and Thompson-Armstrong correctly spelled his championship word 'fatality.'

With the win, Thompson-Armstrong won a trophy and a trip for him and one parent to Washington D.C. to represent Nova Scotia at the Scripps National Spelling Bee May 28 to June 3. TC MEDIA

+ SPELLING BEE

Winning the trophy:

On-list words spelled correctly:

icicle, baton, stucco, lariat, bravura, schnauzer, pochismo, forsythia, Nachtmusik, shrieval, lahar, Weimaraner, Uitlander, galjoen

First round of off-list words:

parrot, Jupiter, rosary, emboss

Theo's anticipated championship word:

duchess (spelled wrong: dutchess), apartment, defendant, larkspur (spelled wrong: larkspers)

Second round of off-list words:

summitry, throes (spelled wrong: throas)

Theo's championship word:

fatality

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TELEVISION

Hockey prodigy makes a cameo on Trailer Park Boys



Cody McEachern
For Metro | Halifax

A Cole Harbour hockey prodigy will be getting 'greasy' with the boys in the upcoming season of Trailer Park Boys.

NHL all-star Nathan MacKinnon, who plays forward for the Colorado Avalanche, made a brief appearance in the new trailer for the 11th season of Trailer Park Boys, which will air on Netflix later this month.

Although the appearance was short, MacKinnon can be seen holding a hockey stick surrounded by some kids he is teaching.

When Ricky, a character from the show, walks in and asks who he is, Ricky is quickly put in his place by a child shouting, "It's Nathan MacKinnon, you dumbass!"

Netflix and Swearnet announced the season's release earlier this month, and the trailer was released Thursday.

The 21-year-old hockey star is no stranger to cameos, as he also made an appearance in the Canadian comedy Mr. D in his earlier years.

Signed to the NHL in 2013, MacKinnon became both the



NHL all-star Nathan MacKinnon, who plays forward for the Colorado Avalanche, made a brief appearance in the new trailer for the 11th season of Trailer Park Boys which will air on Netflix later this month. JONATHAN MACKINNON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

youngest hockey player to ever dress in a regular game and the youngest player to record a hat trick in Avalanche history shortly after his NHL debut.

The trailer is currently out on the Trailer Park Boys YouTube page, and Season 11 is set to begin streaming on Netflix March 31.

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Charges 'politically motivated': Lawyer

LEGAL

Karim Baratov is maintaining his innocence

A lawyer for a Canadian man of Kazakh origins arrested as one of four suspects in a massive hack of Yahoo emails said Thursday that the charges against his client may be "politically motivated by the U.S."

Jag Virk suggested that his client, 22-year-old Karim Baratov, is being used as a scapegoat by American authorities.

"I believe (U.S. President) Donald Trump is using this to make it appear as if he is going after Russian hackers," he said. "These allegations are from three years ago."

Baratov maintains his innocence and has no prior criminal record, his lawyer said, adding that people should wait for all facts to emerge in the case.



Karim Baratov was arrested as a suspect in a massive hack of Yahoo emails. INSTAGRAM

Toronto police said Baratov was arrested Tuesday in the Ontario community of Ancaster at the request of American authorities.

The U.S. Department of Justice said a grand jury in California has indicted Baratov and three others, two of them allegedly officers of

the Russian Federal Security Service, for computer hacking, economic espionage and other criminal offences.

U.S. officials said Baratov also went by the names Kay, Karim Taloverov and Karim Akehmet Tokbergenov.

He was arrested under the extradition act, and appeared in court in Hamilton on Wednesday morning, court staff said. His case was put over until Friday afternoon, when he was expected to appear by video.

An acquaintance described Baratov as an exotic car buff who was popular and flashy but tight-lipped about his personal life — including his job, which involved working with computers.

Also indicted in the alleged conspiracy that authorities said began in January 2014 were Dmitry Aleksandrovich Dokuchaev, 33, Igor Anatolyevich Sushchin, 43, and Alexsey Alexseyevich (Magg) Belan, 29, all Russian nationals and residents. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MP a poster boy in Guatemala

No one is quite sure just how it happened, but Conservative MP Michael Chong has somehow become the poster boy — literally — for a top-quality, "hygienic" experience in Guatemalan washrooms.

Chong's bright smile was spotted on a poster Thursday just outside a washroom in the Central American country, with his arms folded, hair neatly combed and wearing a business suit.

The poster advertises "a special service for special people like you" in Spanish text. That special service is spelled out below: "sanitary" and "hygienic" bathroom facilities.

The poster was spotted by a visiting Canadian, Bailey Greenspon, who tweeted a photo of it. "Michael Chong, your stock photo is reassuring public washroom users in Guatemala," Greenspon tweeted.

Chong responded with tongue firmly in cheek. "Just part of the Chong campaign's internation-



Bailey Greenspon and a poster of Michael Chong. CONTRIBUTED

al outreach in Latin America," the leadership hopeful tweeted in reply, adding the hashtag, "#chongtourage" to the end of his post.

Chisholm Pothier, communications director for Chong's leadership campaign, said he doesn't know for sure how Chong ended up being the face of toilet breaks in Guatemala, but it could be because the photos on Chong's website were at one point open for use.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

O'Leary claims the leadership race is 'rigged'



Kevin O'Leary

Kevin O'Leary's campaign is making allegations of what it calls "fraud" and "widespread vote rigging" in the race.

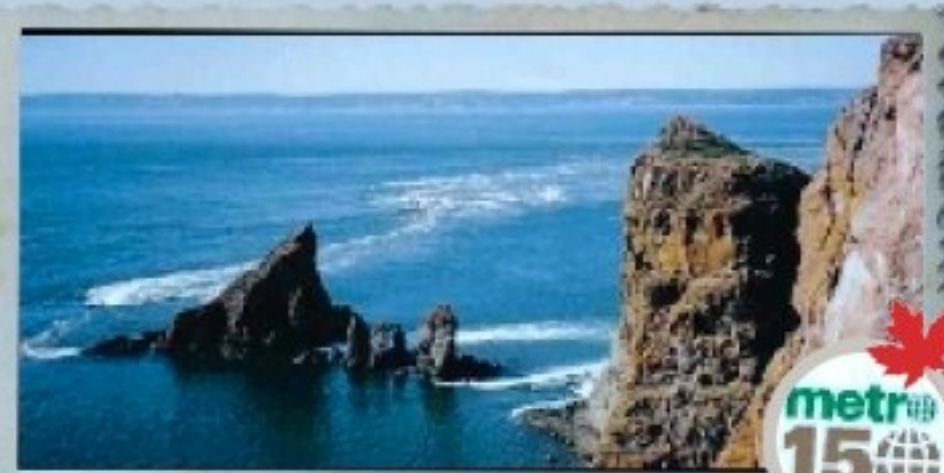
The celebrity businessman's campaign issued a statement Thursday accusing "campaign activists" of using untraceable prepaid credit cards to sign up fake members. The statement says that would violate federal election and campaign financing laws, adding O'Leary's campaign has complained to the party. His campaign speculates some of those who have been signed up might not even know they're members.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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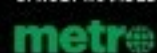
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ESPIONAGE

Intel finds no indication of surveillance

There is no indication that Trump Tower was "the subject of surveillance" by the U.S. government before or after the 2016 election, the top two members of the Senate intelligence committee said Thursday, directly contradicting President Donald Trump's claims.

"Based on the information available to us, we see no indications that Trump Tower was the subject of surveillance by any element of the United States government either before or after Election Day 2016," Sens. Richard

Burr, R-N.C., and Mark Warner, D-Va., said in a one-sentence joint statement Thursday afternoon.

It was not immediately clear what prompted the senators' statement.

Burr and Warner were among eight senior congressional leaders briefed Friday by FBI Director James Comey.

The senators joined a growing, bipartisan group of lawmakers who have since publicly disputed Trump's accusation, which was made in a series of

tweets more than two weeks ago. The president accused former president Barack Obama of tapping the phones at his New York skyscraper and compared the incident to Watergate.

Trump, in an interview Wednesday with Fox News, said he'd learned about the alleged wiretapping from news reports referencing intercepted communications, despite the fact that he and his advisers have publicly denounced stories about government agencies reviewing contacts

between Trump associates and Russians.

Trump said there would be "some very interesting items coming to the forefront over the next two weeks."

Earlier Thursday, House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin pushed back on the accusations as well.

"We've cleared that up," Ryan said, adding that he'd received a briefing and seen no evidence of Trump's wiretap claims.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Residents, activists, and friends and family members of victims of gun violence march down Michigan Avenue carrying nearly 800 wooden crosses bearing the names of people murdered in the city in 2016 on Dec. 31, 2016 in Chicago. GETTY IMAGES

Acclimatizing to violence

Living in New Orleans, what's shocking isn't the sound of gunfire, but how quickly it becomes quotidian

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
From the U.S.



A young man stood outside a pharmacy on a busy New Orleans street this week, selling CDs of his music for \$5 a disc.

This isn't unusual here; I've seen young men (not so much women) sell music and paintings outside pharmacies and gas stations. My sister, visiting from Vancouver, bought the CD, and listening to it while driving around, we heard him rap about people he's lost.

He seemed young, maybe not even out of his teens, and the people he wished he could "talk for a minute" with were only 20 or 22. It's not explicit what they were lost to, but this is New Orleans, and it's a safe bet guns were involved.

The city got off to a violent start in 2017. In just the first month of the year, 75 people were hurt or killed by gunshots, a 50-per-cent jump over 2016, which was an usually violent year in its own right. Last year, 604 guns were reported stolen — up 19 per cent from 2015 — in a trend that police say fuels street violence and arms gangs.

In a way totally foreign to a Canadian, the normalcy of life here exists atop the knowledge that guns are everywhere. Road rage encounters not infrequently turn to shootings. Sitting in my living room, I've heard shots a handful of times. It only took a few months before that fact stopped surprising me, and I play the same game as my neighbours: gunshot or fireworks?

The news headlines become

routine. A man was shot in an apartment complex in the city's east end on Sunday. Two men and a woman were killed (and another woman injured by a shot to the head) in the Metairie suburb on Wednesday. Last week, a 30-year-old mother and her six-year-old and 10-year-old sons were all shot dead.

In a recent piece for NPR, a reporter noted how mundane all this violence has become, how people absorb it into their daily lives as fact, endure it like the weather.

But it's not exactly that simple. Gun violence is both mundane and an omnipresent threat. It's a psychological underpinning to otherwise innocuous decisions you might make, such as what street to walk down, or whether to flip the bird to another driver. And that's coming from a white ex-pat woman, in a city where 70 per cent of those killed by guns are black men, according to a recent report in the Gambit newspaper.

With U.S. President Donald Trump's crusade against "inner cities," the long-debunked "law and order" approach is reigning again in Washington, even though we know that violence is learned, that offenders have often been victims and ending the cycle requires dramatic improvements to health, education, employment and safety. But perhaps the most frustrating fact is just how easy it is to drop into a city so emblematic of this country's racial inequality and extraordinary gun violence, and feel the current of acceptance pull you in, even just a little.



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A new kind of diplomacy

POLITICS

Justin Trudeau trying to get an in with Trump through Ivanka

A businesswoman whose life-style brand is struggling with liberals. A liberal-multilateralist prime minister who needs an in with a conservative-nationalist president.

Diplomacy is rooted in interests. And Ivanka Trump and Justin Trudeau both have an interest in hanging out with each other.

The prime minister sat with the president's daughter Wednesday night at the Broadway musical *Come From Away*, the Canadian show about the Newfoundland town that took in stranded Americans on Sept. 11, 2001. It was his second olive branch to her in just over a month.

Some U.S. news outlets suggested Trudeau had been sending a kind of passive-aggressive message: "Justin Trudeau brought



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's budding friendship with Ivanka Trump appears to be a way to get an in with her father, the president of the U.S. INSTAGRAM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ivanka Trump to a Broadway show that celebrates generosity towards foreigners in need," the *New York Times* tweeted. Whether or not that was true, he was also offering a kind of cashless donation to her company.

Trudeau joked of his "bro-mance" with former president Barack Obama. Shared youth

and mutual interest in women's issues notwithstanding, his new bestiehood appears much more a marriage of convenience.

"It is just so *Game of Thrones*," said John Higginbotham, a former Canadian diplomat in Washington, referring to the television show in which warring family dynasties strike strategic alliances in ruthless pursuit of power.

Like Donald Trump before her, Ivanka Trump has made a brand out of her name. Her name has been tarnished, in the eyes of millions of progressive American consumers, by her father's xenophobia and sexism. Who better to be seen with than the fashionable foreign progressive feminist who hugs refugees?

For Trudeau, daughter diplomacy offers the prospect of a lifeline to a president who shares almost none of his principles but who often appears to value personal relationships over ideology and policy — and who appreciates a political gift. Donald Trump has lavished praise upon chief executives who have let him take undeserved credit for their investments.

"It looks as if foreign leaders think the way to approach Trump is by direct or indirect appeals to his ego and personality, rather than in terms of national interests," said Charles Stevenson, a former State Department policy planner who teaches foreign policy at Johns Hopkins University.

Donald Trump, not Ivanka Trump, was Trudeau's original invite to the play, communications director Kate Purchase said. Trump told Trudeau he couldn't make it, Purchase said, "but suggested that perhaps Ivanka Trump could join instead."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Another judge blocks Muslim ban

Rejecting arguments from the government that President Donald Trump's revised travel ban was substantially different from the first one, judges in Hawaii and Maryland blocked the executive order from taking effect as scheduled on Thursday, using the president's own words as evidence that the order discriminates against Muslims.

The rulings in Hawaii late Wednesday and in Maryland early Thursday were victories for civil liberties groups and advocates for immigrants and refugees, who argued that a temporary ban on travel from six predominantly Muslim countries violated the First Amendment. The Trump administration argued the ban was intended to protect the U.S. from terrorism.

In Greenbelt, Maryland, U.S. District Judge Theodore Chuang called Trump's own statements about barring Muslims from entering the U.S. "highly relevant."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Defence, security the winners in Trump budget, but many others lose

Military spending would get the biggest boost in President Donald Trump's proposed budget. Environmental programs, medical research, Amtrak and an array of international and cultural programs would take big hits.

The budget proposal out Thursday is a White House wish list; it'll be up to Congress to decide where money goes. If Trump gets his way, there will be more losers than winners among

government departments and programs. Here is a sampling:

WINNERS

■ The Pentagon. Trump proposes a 10 per cent increase in the massive defence budget, with an extra \$52 billion going to accelerate the war against the Islamic State group and address insufficient weapons stocks, personnel gaps, deferred maintenance and cyber vulnerabilities.

■ Veterans Affairs. Up 5.9 per

cent. That's an additional \$4.4 billion, driven by ever-growing health care costs. The plan would allocate \$3.5 billion to extend an expiring Veterans Choice program.

■ Homeland Security. Up 6.8 per cent. That's \$2.8 billion more. Most of the increase, \$2.6 billion, would be to help kick-start Trump's promised border wall. The president has repeatedly said Mexico would pay for

the wall; Mexican officials are adamant that they won't. ■ School choice: \$1.4 billion more to expand school choice programs, bringing spending in that area to \$20 billion, even as the Education Department's overall budget would be cut by \$9 billion, or 13 per cent.

LOSERS:

■ EPA, facing a 31.4 per cent cut, or \$2.6 billion. The plan would cut 3,200 jobs at the

agency, eliminate a new plan for tighter regulations on power plants, and "zero out" programs to clean up the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay. EPA climate change research would be eliminated. Grants for state and local drinking and wastewater projects would be preserved.

■ Health and Human Services, facing a \$12.6 billion cut, or 16.2 per cent. The plan would cut \$5.8 billion from the nearly

\$32 billion National Institutes of Health, the nation's premier medical research agency, bringing its total to \$25.9 billion.

■ State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development. Down 31 per cent, or \$17 billion. Foreign aid would be reduced, as would money to the UN and to multilateral development banks including the World Bank.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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—Hollywood Reporter

Julia Sarah Stone Dylan Authors Molly Parker Allan Hawco

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Directed by Bruce McDonald

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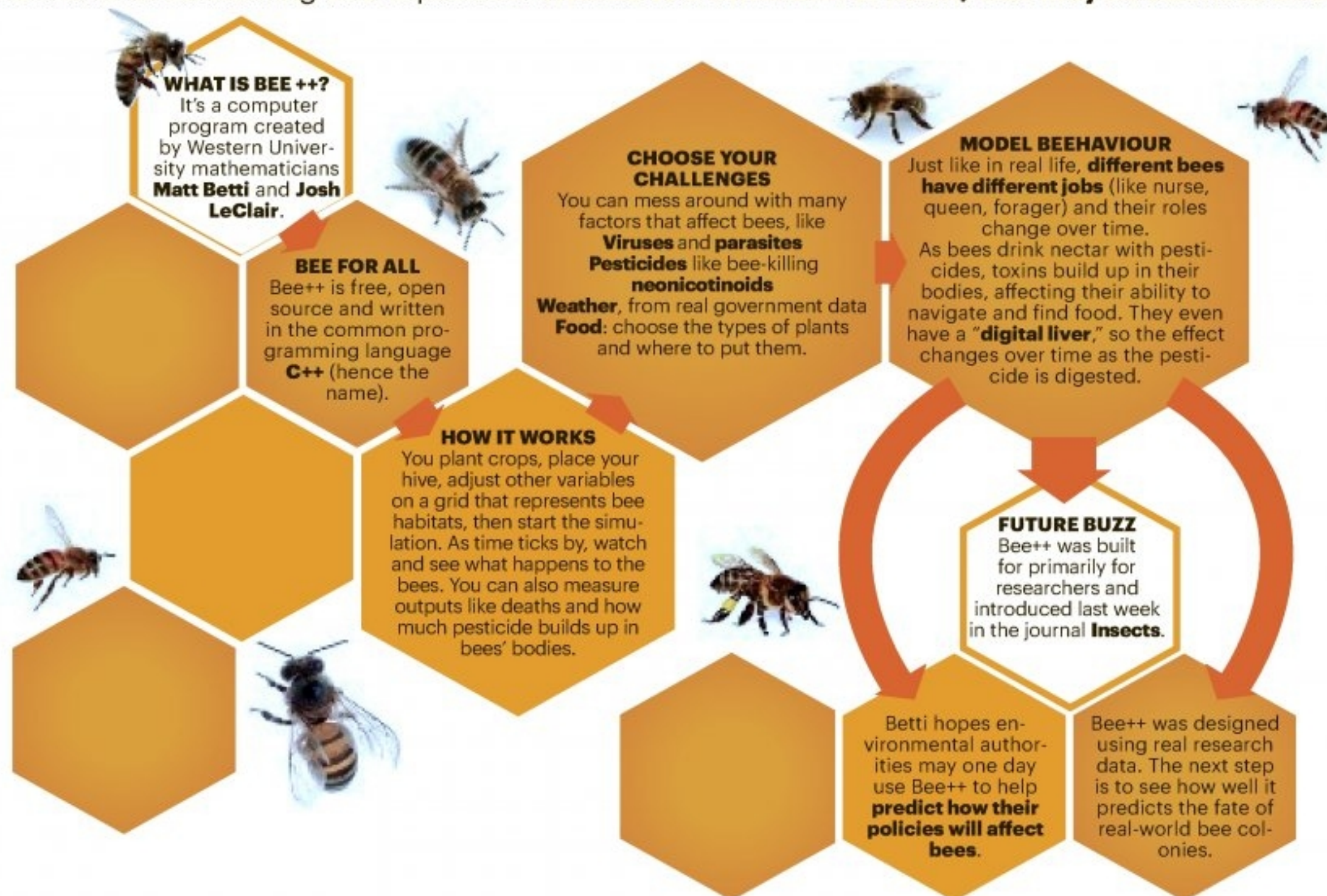
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Honeybees are in trouble. For years, they've been plagued with Colony Collapse Disorder, a strange syndrome killing masses of bees. Why? It's a complicated combo of pesticides, parasites and other factors. For the future of our food supply and economy, we must protect pollinators. But studying them is time-consuming and expensive. **Thanks to a some clever math, that may be about to change.**



FINDINGS Your week in science



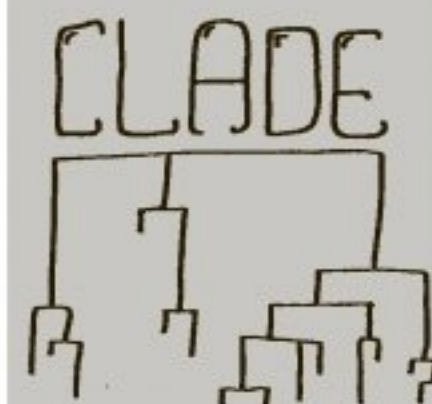
STRETCHING SCREENS

Using simple silicon and gel, UBC scientists made a touchscreen that can sense pressure, motion or a hovering finger, even when it's folded or bent. One day, you might be able to just fold out your phone into a tablet.

POWER UP

Speaking of smartphones, Disney has built a prototype "charging room" with a copper pole and aluminum walls that can charge 10 batteries at once — wirelessly. It's safe for people to enter, the company says, and it sounds like something that could come in handy in the future Magic Kingdom.

SOUND SMART



DEFINITION

In evolution, a **clade** is a group of living things including a common ancestor and all its direct descendants. It's one branch on the tree of life.

USE IT IN A SENTENCE

My great-grandmother, my grandma, my mom and me are one big happy **clade**.



CITIZEN SCIENTIST by Genna Buck

Play on, kids. Slime isn't going to kill you.

The Great Slime Panic of 2017. If you have school-age kids, you know what I'm talking about.

Mania for slime — a bouncy, stretchy concoction of water, craft glue, food colouring and borax — is sweeping social media.

But Health Canada recently recommended against using borax in children's arts and crafts, citing possible "developmental and reproductive health effects."

As a rule, I trust Health Canada's scientific expertise com-

pletely. But something about this dictum didn't sit right with me.

Canadians have been using borax, a powdery white mineral, as a household detergent for more than a century. And small, harmless amounts of boron, its elemental form, naturally occur in fruits, vegetables and drinking water.

Borax can irritate skin and eyes, and you definitely shouldn't eat it, but could playing with goo really harm your child's future reproductive health? And why is the gov-

ernment suddenly concerned about it?

The second question is easier. Health Canada has launched a long-term project evaluating the safety of chemicals used for a long time, but perhaps not scrutinized enough back in the day.

For insight into the first question, I asked medical toxicologist Dr. Andrew Stolbach.

The highlights: Long-term exposure to high doses of boron is linked to testicular abnormalities in dogs and rats. These studies are small and mostly more than

20 years old.

There are a few small studies of people exposed to high levels of boron for years, which showed slightly elevated rates of fertility problems and miscarriage. But the difference was not significant.

Bottom line: he's fine with his five-year-old daughter playing with borax slime now and then.

"To me, it's a very, very small risk. And it's a theoretical risk."

Science Question?

genna.buck@metronews.ca

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Mouse House undergoes some real-life renovation



Audra McDonald, who stars as Madame Garderobe in *Beauty and the Beast*, insists live-action remakes shouldn't upset the animation traditionalists. CONTRIBUTED

INTERVIEW

Beauty and the Beast sparks Disney's new era of remakes

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada



Disney is banking on the *Beauty and the Beast*.

After all, not only is it presumably the most expensive musical ever made, but it will also ring in a new era for the Mouse House — one in which the studio will focus on morphing live-action remakes from its own animated classics.

Of course, they began last year with *The Jungle Book* and *Cinderella* but this weekend's *Beauty and the Beast* officially initiates a new age of live-action adaptations that just may be leaving diehard Disney animation fans moping.

"Traditionalists might think that it means the thing they love so much is being erased but it's not and it's not being shunned in anyway," explained actress Audra McDonald, who portrays Madame Garderobe in this weekend's remake of the 1991 ani-

mated blockbuster. "That film is absolutely perfect and no one denies that; Disney isn't trying to get rid of that — they're just exploring."

In fact, McDonald goes one step further, insisting that Disney's investment in reimagining old classics will only benefit fervent film-lovers. While immortal gems certainly have charm, there is a delightful difference in seeing iconic cartoons transformed.

"It just allows for subtler shading that can only be achieved with actual human beings," said the six-time Tony Award-winning thespian.

In fact, whether it's the endearing tale of a beauty that falls in love with a hideous beast or any other animated gem-turned-live action hit, the form of any fairy tale will only be as good as its story.

"This story touches the core in our humanity of wanting to be seen for who we are," said McDonald of what really makes the updated classic work. "No matter what generation we are in, what period of time we're living in, that's always going to be a deeply human thing and that's why I think it continues to resonate."

▶ OTHER REMAKES EN ROUTE

The Little Mermaid

Early in development, Lin-Manuel Miranda is currently shaping songs for the updated musical about a mermaid out of water.

Cruella

Fresh off her Oscar win for *La La Land*, Emma Stone will next take on playing the villain from *101 Dalmations* in this origin story.



Three favourites getting the live-action treatment



The Lion King (tbd)

This cherished lion-cub drama will be getting a real-life renovation at the hands of *Jungle Book*-director Jon Favreau, who has cast Donald Glover (TV's *Atlanta*) to play Simba while James Earl Jones will return to portray Mufasa, the same character he voiced in the 1994 hit.



Dumbo (May 2018)

It's been over 75 years since a big-eared elephant broke hearts on the big screen in this Disney classic. Now renowned filmmaker Tim Burton will rejuvenate the peppy pachyderm. However with a script being written by Ehren Kruger (*The Ring*), this *Dumbo* could be a little less straight-forward.



Mulan (November 2018)

Although little is known, this 1998 Disney favourite is definitely in the works with director Niki Caro (the upcoming *The Zookeeper's Wife*) in charge. A tale about one of China's greatest heroines, the studio has put out a casting call for an Asian lead after false rumours that Jennifer Lawrence was cast created an uproar with fans.

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Maritimes' prodigal son stays home

INTERVIEW

Allan Hawco's love for native turf breeding much success

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada



It's the day after the Canadian Screen Awards and Allan Hawco missed out on the whole affair.

Grounded in Newfoundland after a treacherous windstorm left tens of thousands without electricity, the actor resigned to watch his latest film *Weirdos* pick up two CSAs from afar. But he actually didn't mind that much.

"I don't like leaving the province," laughed the 39-year-old thespian a day later. "I was bummed that I wasn't there with all my friends last night but there was a part of me that didn't mind staying a little bit later in St. John's."

Raised on *The Rock*, Hawco is truly one of the Maritimes' prodigal sons. Not only does he still make Newfoundland



Allan Hawco in *Weirdos*, the film about a teenager living in a small town in Nova Scotia in 1976 who decides to run away to live with his mother. CONTRIBUTED

his home, but it's where the actor-producer decided to film his former six-season television hit drama *Republic of Doyle* and his new historical Netflix fur-trade series *Frontier*.

"I just kind of grew up with this severe love for Newfoundland — it's weird," explained

Hawco. "I wanted more than anything in my life to produce and create television and film there and work and live there. I've wanted that far more than I might have, in my younger years, to be a Hollywood celebrity."

As such, Hawco is proving an

intriguing personality in Canadian entertainment. By shunning the alluring spotlight of Tinseltown to achieve success north of the border, he's arguably inspiring other ambitious actors averse to the seductive pull of American showbiz.

In Hawco's case, it's also

landed him a small-but-satisfying paternal part in *Weirdos* (in theatres today) where he mingled with fellow-minded flag-wavers like iconic director Bruce McDonald (*Highway 61*, *Trigger*) and celebrated scribe Daniel MacIvor.

"He's been a mentor to me over the years," admitted Hawco of the Cape Breton playwright and his Canadian Screen Award-winning script about

two teens coming-of-age as they hitchhike across 1970's Nova Scotia.

"But another reason I wanted to do the movie is because of Bruce. There's people like them who have committed their lives to telling our stories and believe in it. There's a beautiful thing when you do that and people care — that's something that's hard to achieve and when it does work, it's very special."

▶ BEHIND THE SCENES

Weirdos wins two

"(Daniel) was unprepared for the thought that he might win," said Allan Hawco of MacIvor's Canadian Screen Award for original screenplay. *Weirdos* also won the supporting actress for Molly Parker. "There's so many great films out there and the thought our little movie has made an impact — I'm pretty proud of that."

MacIvor's unique skill

"He has such insight to what we are as people," said Hawco of Daniel

MacIvor's award-winning script. "He's able to shine a certain light on it that I think is difficult at times (but) his whole body of work has got that with a light touch of humor."

Hollywood vs home

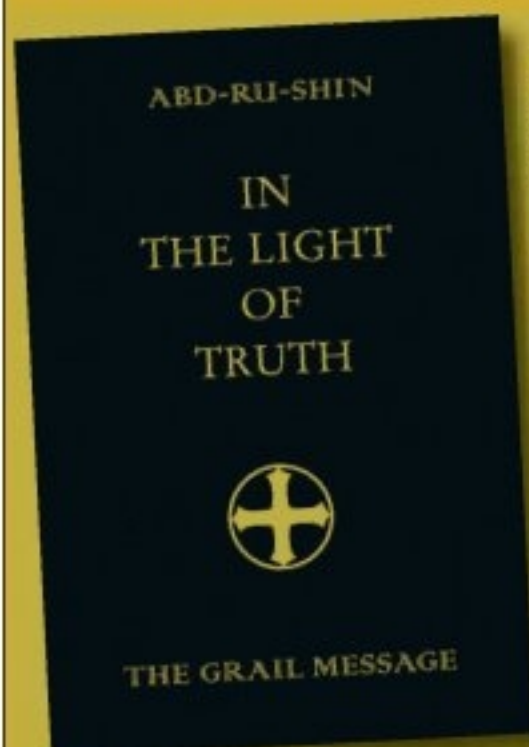
"If I could be married to both and disappear for a few months to do amazing work, that would be the ultimate dream," said Hawco of choosing a career in Canada over Hollywood. "I just don't like leaving the province."

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INTERVIEW

20 years on, Boyle's T2 boys choose life

As with any long-delayed family reunion, nobody was expecting the sequel to *Trainspotting* to be a piece of cake, or even a gob of heroin.

Least of all director Danny Boyle and star Ewan McGregor, whose friendship came apart over the casting for Boyle's 2000 terror-in-paradise film *The Beach*, in which Leonardo DiCaprio got the lead gig McGregor felt Boyle had promised him.

McGregor and Boyle didn't speak for most of the two decades since *Trainspotting*, a bleak satire about Edinburgh heroin addicts that became Britain's smack-infused answer to the 1990s indie-film revolution spearheaded by the likes of America's Quentin Tarantino and Steven Soderbergh. But now the sequel *T2 Trainspotting* is almost upon us.

"Ewan and I fell out over *The Beach*, and it was my fault, and we reconciled about three or four years ago," Boyle, 60, says from Australia, one stop on a worldwide promotional tour.

But getting McGregor, 45, to reprise his Mark Renton character — now older but not wiser, and in even bigger trouble than before — was just one of many hurdles to overcome on the sequel path. Boyle also had to round up other key members of the *Trainspotting* cast: flash



Jonny Lee Miller, Ewan McGregor and Ewen Bremner are struggling with the transition into adulthood in *T2*. CONTRIBUTED

Sick Boy (Jonny Lee Miller), psycho Begbie (Robert Carlyle) and sad Spud (Ewen Bremner). He also found room in the film for a cameo by Renton's ex-girlfriend Diane (Kelly Macdonald), while greatly expanding the female quotient with wily new character Veronika (Anjela Nedyalkova).

Then there was the small matter of the script, which returning screenwriter John Hodge adapted from two novels by Scottish author Irvine Welsh, the original *Trainspotting* and its follow-up *Porno*.

The story had to be something

the Manchester-born filmmaker really wanted to do, because his career has been noteworthy for its never-look-back variety of stories and genres. In the 23 years since his feature debut with the black comedy *Shallow Grave*, which also starred McGregor, he's successfully tackled horror (*28 Days Later*), science fiction (*Sunshine*), family comedy (*Millions*), Bollywood-style romance (Oscar winner *Slumdog Millionaire*) and real-life survival drama (*127 Hours*), among other pursuits.

There were multiple attempts at a *T2* script until Boyle got one

he was satisfied with.

He finally got a script that he and the actors liked, and shooting commenced. But when he was editing the film in post-production, he noticed something he hadn't before: how much the children in the middle-aged lives of Renton, Spud, Sick Boy and Begbie were affecting the tone of the film. All these guys are now struggling to Choose Life not just for themselves, but also for the children they've fathered, and not in ideal circumstances.

Boyle also realized that *T2* had to be much less of a drug-infused movie that *Trainspotting* was — although there are a lot of hilarious callbacks to the original — and to concentrate more of the boys-to-men struggle of the protagonists.

But all of the actors playing them have aged delightfully. *T2* may have been a difficult family reunion to pull off, but it's turned out to be a happy one.

"They've changed, though, all of them. Including Ewan, because he's directed a movie now (*American Pastoral*), and Bobby has also directed a movie (*Barney Thomson*)... they now know so much about filmmaking, whereas I remember, the first time, how little they knew about filmmaking, just as I did my first time."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TOP 150 FOR 150

CELEBRATING CANADA'S GIFTS TO THE WORLD

Canucks talk in slang, eh?

SEAN PLUMMER

Your knowledge of Canadian slang may start and stop with Bob and Doug McKenzie, but our language is littered with Canadianisms that our neighbours to the south would be hard-pressed to understand.

Here are some examples of Canadian English that might reveal you're more of a keener than you realized.

GIVE'R: To do something as awesomely as possible, popularized by the 2002 mockumentary FUBAR.

KERFUZZLE: A fuss or commotion; likely of British ori-

gin, which accounts for its use on *Downton Abbey*.

TAKE OFF: To leave ("Okay, I'm gonna take off"); or, Bob & Doug style, a replacement for the f-bomb ("Why don't you take off, eh?").

DOUBLE DOUBLE: A Tim Hortons coffee order (two creams, two sugars). In fact, Timmies has trademarked the phrase "Home of the Double Double."

BOOZE CAN: An after-hours club that sells alcohol illegally.

CHESTERFIELD: A sofa or couch that seats at least three.



Great White North is an introduction to the Canadianisms that make up our speech. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Play it back

Sportscasters have been throwing to tape for more than 50 years. But the practice of instant replay got its far-from-instant start in Canada.

It was during Hockey Night in Canada's 1955-1956 season that CBC producer George Retzlaff introduced a "wet-



film" technique to record and play back a goal, albeit several minutes after it happened.

American network CBS introduced true instant replay in 1963 during an Army-Navy football game.

But we got there first — check the tape! **SEAN PLUMMER**



It was during Hockey Night in Canada that instant replay was first used. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Hail Caesar!

Created in 1969 by Calgary bartender Max Chell, the Caesar essentially spiked the Bloody Mary with clam-infused tomato juice (hence Mott's Clamato) and other spices. A Clamato-commissioned poll in 2009 (the bevvie's 40th anniversary) concluded that the Caesar was Canada's most popular cocktail.

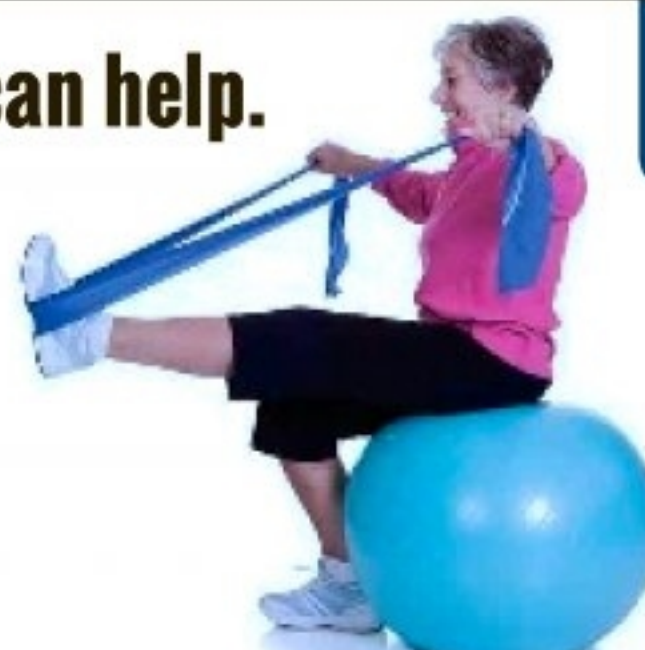
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The *urban* Cuba you don't know

It's a shame, really: 99 per cent of Canadians visiting Cuba stay in resorts. That's not an exaggeration; it's a quote from the director of Cuba's tourism board. We go for the sun and sand, complain about the resort food, and — while we may do a day trip — go home without really appreciating the island nation. Venture off resort, and you'll encounter a country on the cusp of change, rich in history and home to amazing and resilient people. Here are a few things you'll see.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY DEAN LISK/METRO CANADA

Eternal Havana

While the sharp details of the cornices, balustrades and mouldings of Havana's patchwork-painted buildings are eroding like water poured over a sugar cube, they are not dead or abandoned spaces. The sounds of daily life still filter through the half-open shutters or the cracked window glass.

A move is underway in Old Havana, founded in 1519, to restore many of these once- and still-elegant buildings using tourism revenue. Others are being restored privately, including a five-



storey building across from Parque Central which once housed a shopping arcade and schools. The gutted,

sand-blasted and re-painted interior will soon open as the Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski La Habana (shown on left). The luxury hotel includes a rooftop pool with views of the Great Theatre of Havana and the dome of the Capital.

Rich in history, the Hotel Nacional de Cuba stands on a small hill above the wave-etched Malecón sea wall in the Vedado neighbourhood. Built in 1930 with the understanding it would only ever fly the Cuban flag, it is a silent character in nation-

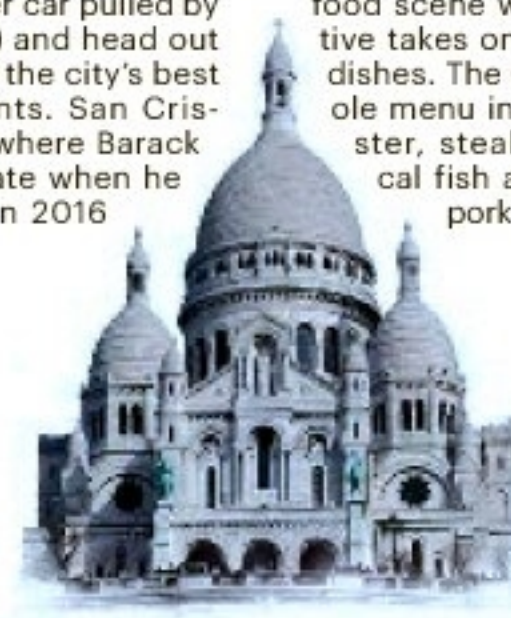
al events that have played out since its construction.

Some of the rooms in the eight-floor hotel are named after its famous guests, like Errol Flynn, Fred Astaire, Rita Hayworth and Nat King Cole. A mafia suite pays homage to a summit U.S. gangsters held in the hotel in 1946 organized by Lucky Luciano and Meyer Lansky. An adjoining door opens to the one used by Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner. The walls of the private bar, open only to hotel guests, is lined with

photos of all the famous people who have stayed there over the last 85 years.

While many hotels have in-house restaurants, try exploring Havana's ripening culinary scene instead. Rent an oldtimer (the classic 1950s cars still being used) or a coco taxi (a two-seater car pulled by a bicycle) and head out to one of the city's best restaurants. San Cristóbal — where Barack Obama ate when he visited in 2016

— is one the growing number of paladares (privately-owned restaurants, as opposed to state-operated ones) infusing the capital's food scene with innovative takes on traditional dishes. The Cuban-Creole menu includes lobster, steak, fresh local fish and roasted pork.



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Contemporary Culture

Yes, Havana has — for lack of a better term — hipsters. Lined up two deep along the wall encircling the Fabrika de Arte Cubano (shown above), a former factory transformed into an exhibition space, they wait to be allowed in to enjoy the music and performances in the Vedado region of the city.

Held in their hands or tucked in the pockets of their skinny jeans and slacks is a card given at the door on which bartenders will record what drinks are ordered. The old factory is a canvas on which Cubans are reflecting their own experiences in a post-Fidel Cuba. Once you are done with the art, music and dancing, you must show your card at the door and pay for your drinks. Lose the card and there is a penalty fee.

If your trip to Fabrika has you convinced you need a lesson in loosening your hips, Currys Dance School can help you with your backbone slide. The school is located across the street from Havana's only mosque and was recently renovated to allow more space for lessons, which cost 15 CUC an hour. A major investor in the school is Vancouverite Alessandra Quaglia. Coming to Havana for a number of years for an annual Salsa Festival, she ended up staying for a few extra months to improve her steps, and, after her visit, made the decision to invest in the space. "I just went with it," Quaglia says. "Once you get a taste of it, it's like a bug, an addiction."

To get a sense of how important dance and music is in Havana — and the rest of Cuba — no trip is complete without a visit to Tropicana. It's a bit of a cliché, but this outdoor show has been cha cha cha-ing along for more than 80 years with its head-dressed showgirls, baritone singers and elaborate stage numbers. Even if it's not your thing, you are given a cigar and a bottle of rum (one for four people to share) and your choice of cola or water so you can pour at 'libre' when you are seated.

Historical Heroes and icons

With his death in November, you'd expect to see images of el comandante, Fidel Castro, throughout the capital city. His bearded portrait is there, but spying it is rare. You're more likely to see bereted Che Guevara — whose image appears prominently on the side of the Ministry of Interior Building — staring back at you from photographs, painting and street art.

More likely to turn your head from Cuban adoration is a literary hero, one from Cuba's liberators from Spain rather than from Capitalism, José Martí. A statue of the poet, journalist and philosopher looms over the Plaza de la Revolución, his bust sits in front of schools, and — standing with a child cradled in one arm and the other raised in defiance and pointing behind him, finger outstretched — staring from the plaza in front the U.S. embassy.

Still, it's an American whose legend haunts the city and nearby countryside. Like the patron saint of tourism, Ernest Hemingway's memory looms as large as his drinking habits.

Shoulder-to-shoulder tourists pack into La Bodeguita del Medio at 10 a.m. for mojitos (the rum, sugar and mint-filled drink inspiring revelers to carve their names into the restaurant's wooden shuttered front facade), wait in line at El Floridita to sip on an afternoon or evening daiquiri, or pay their respect by leaning through the windows into the writer's home, Finca Vigia, a few kilometers outside Havana. There you can see the mounted heads of rare big game animals, bookshelves lined with well-read tomes and Hemingway's war correspondent uniform stiffly hanging in the closet off his bedroom. Outside, you can get a bit closer to Hemingway's pet cemetery where he buried his dogs; Black, Negrita, Linda and Neron (his pet cats apparently didn't warrant grave markers).

The author of these pieces was hosted by Cuba Tourism, which didn't review or approve the stories.

TRAVEL NOTES

What you need to know when you go:

Passport

Tourists must have a passport, which should be valid for at least one week after the return date. Anyone planning to work, do business or study in Cuba must have a visa authorized by the Consulate General of Cuba.

Tourist card

Before landing visitors must fill in a tourist card, supplied by their airline, which grants a 90 day stay in Cuba. Do not lose the card. You need to show it when you leave.

Shopping

Shops in hotels, villas and airports sell Cuban cigars, rum and coffee, as well as snacks, arts and crafts, toiletries, books and souvenirs. There are many open-air markets featuring local goods throughout the country. Specialty stores in the main tourist regions also carry high-end European and other imports.

Currency

All goods and services for tourists in Cuba are priced in Cuban Convertible pesos only.

Video and photography

Photos and videos can be taken freely, except in restricted areas, such as military zones. Museums may also have regulations.

Electrical conversion

Cuba's electricity is 110 volts, 60Hz, but most hotels and resorts have 220 volts. Electrical outlets take flat plug prongs.

Clocks

Cuba is on Eastern Standard Time.

Internet

Many hotels and resorts provide a connection, otherwise Wi-Fi is limited to public squares and some hotel lobbies. Buy a 60-minute Wi-Fi card for about \$2.75 Canadian at the airport or your hotel.

Health and insurance

Tourists are required to have travel insurance when visiting Cuba. Insurance can also be obtained when arriving at the airport from Asistur S.A. Many hotels and resorts have doctors on staff or on call. International medical clinics are equipped to handle complex medical conditions.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

2 PLACES TO VISIT



Viñales

This community in the western end of the island shares its name with the valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its outdoor activities — hiking, horseback riding — and unique steep-sided hills called mogotes.

During a visit to the region, Fidel Castro suggested the cliff face of one of the mogotes would be perfect for a mural. Local officials took his suggestion and ran with it.

The result is the Mural de la Prehistoria: a primary colour filled image of dinosaurs, humans and monsters. The site is popular with visitors — some even get married below the mural — and a restaurant nearby serves a traditional Cuban meal of rice and beans with pork and chicken. If you decide you'd like to stay overnight, many Cubans have opened their one-story homes so you can rent rooms (even entire houses). Called Casas Particulares, the prices range according to location and the season.

Matanzas

No need to search for the fountain of youth, or love, because both pools of slowly dripping water can be found around 50 metres underground in Cuevas de Bellamar near the city of Matanzas. Discovered by a Chinese worker in the 1860s, there are more than 750 metres of tunnels to visit (although the cave is much larger and still being explored).

While it took more than 40,000 years for the cave to develop — and it is still growing — the guided tour lasts 45 minutes and ends with a hot, humid and sometimes slippery staircase (with more than 200 steps) back to the surface.

If you feel unsteady, guide Jesus recommends that don't you worry, that's just the water from the fountain of love working its magic on your heart.

If there is an issue above ground in Matanzas take a trip back in time to the Boteca Francesca Dr. E Triolet. While it stopped operating as a pharmacy in 1964, it is a now a museum where glass jars and canisters still hold some of the ingredients used to fill prescriptions. Founded in 1882, the pharmacy was famous distributing a coffee syrup used to treat asthma, as well as concocted wine-based remedies for anemia and a scorpion-infused oil for kidney problems.

The city is also known for its Afro-Cuban culture, including Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, a folklore and rumba dance and music group that performs in Ruinas de Matasiete.

The world famous group started performing in the 1950s and demonstrate the development of this sensual yet respectful dance and its different styles; yambú, columbia and guaguancó.

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The Senators will reportedly host the Canadiens in December in a special outdoor Heritage Classic to mark the NHL's 100th anniversary

World gold next step for Canada, Homan

CURLING

Ottawa rink keen to better silver, bronze in Beijing

The next move for Rachel Homan at the women's world curling championship is the top of the podium after silver and bronze medals in previous appearances.

Homan, third Emma Miskew, second Joanne Courtney and lead Lisa Weagle out of the Ottawa Curling Club open the 2017 world championship Saturday against host China in Beijing.

They won the national championship Feb. 26 beating Michelle Englot in an extra end in St. Catharines, Ont. Homan, Miskew, Weagle and second Alison Kreviazuk were third in their world championship debut in 2013 in Riga, Latvia, and runner-up the following year in Saint John, N.B. Courtney, who will play in her first world championship, was recruited in 2014 after Kreviazuk moved to Sweden.

"The first time you go, everything is so new and foreign," Homan said. "We did our best and came up a little bit short. The second time was in Canada and we did a little bit better. We're fairly young for being able to go our third worlds. We have a bit of experience on our side."

Winnipeg's Jennifer Jones



Rachel Homan's Ottawa rink kicks off the world championship this Saturday in Beijing.

SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"We're fairly young for being able to go our third worlds. We have a bit of experience on our side."

Rachel Homan

dominated women's curling at the 2014 Winter Olympics, going undefeated to claim gold. But it's been nine years since Canada won a women's world championship.

Jones took the crown in Ver-

non, B.C., in 2008, which was a year after Homan graduated from high school. The average age of Homan's current team is 28.5. Swiss women have dominated recently winning four of the last five world titles. Binita Feltscher was victorious last year in Swift Current, Sask.

Homan topped the preliminary round in 2014 with a 10-1 record in Saint John, but lost the final to Feltscher.

The 12-hour time difference from Ottawa means Canada plays their first game at 1 a.m. ET on Saturday. Homan and her teammates began adjusting their sleep patterns four days before their departure.

"Yep, definitely going to be in a bubble and far away in a different culture," Homan acknowledged. "I think there's going to be lots of people watching us and cheering us on from all over Canada and we know that."

They'll play in the 17,000-seat Capital Gymnasium, which was the venue for the 2014 men's world championship. Canada's Kevin Koe finished out of the medals there, but won the men's title in 2016. Nolan Thiessen, who was Koe's lead in 2014 and now a Curling Canada consultant, has met with Homan's team to give advice on handling smog and unfamiliar food.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

U.S. women stand pat on boycott intentions

A deadline for the U.S. women's hockey team to decide whether they will boycott the upcoming world championships passed Thursday without players changing their mind in a stand-off with USA Hockey over wages.

"We are focused on the issue of equitable support and stand by our position," the players said in a statement released shortly after 5 p.m. ET. "We continue to be grateful for the encouragement and loyalty of our fans."

The

powerhouse U.S. women's program has been plunged into chaos less than a week before the scheduled start of training camp and just over two weeks from defending its world championship gold medal on home ice in Plymouth, Mich. Coach Ken Klee was replaced by Robb Stauber earlier this month, and now it's unclear how USA Hockey will fill its roster for a tournament it has won six of the past eight times and was expected to serve as a measuring stick for next year's Olympics, just 11 months away.

Ken Klee was replaced by Robb Stauber earlier this month, and now it's unclear how USA Hockey will fill its roster for a tournament it has won six of the past eight times and was expected to serve as a measuring stick for next year's Olympics, just 11 months away.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



GETTY IMAGES

MLB

Jays re-up Sanchez at \$535K minimum

Aaron Sanchez says there are "no hard feelings" after the Toronto Blue Jays renewed his contract for the minimum salary of \$535,000 in the major leagues and \$304,444 in the unlikely event he is sent to the minors.

Sanchez went 15-2 with a 3.00 ERA last year, his first full season as a starting pitcher.

Toronto offered a modest increase above the minimum based on team's formula, which was rejected by Sanchez and his agent, Scott Boras.

"It's something that we didn't agree on," Sanchez said Thursday, when he gave up three runs and four hits in 2-1/3 innings in Toronto's 11-5 loss to the New York Yankees.

"They said there's a plan in place for quite some time. I'm just here to worry about getting better and helping this team. That's always been my mindset and I think that will never change."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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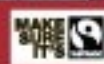


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Fighting Irish escape upset grip of Tigers



Notre Dame's Austin Torres blocks a shot by Princeton's Steven Cook on Thursday in Buffalo. MADDIE MEYER/GETTY IMAGES

MARCH MADNESS

Another Big Ten team sent home by Middle Tennessee

The Fighting Irish avoided the dreaded upset from a 12th seed in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

Barely. Bonzie Colson scored 18 points and the West Region's fifth-seeded Fighting Irish avoided a meltdown in the final two minutes to hang on for a 60-58 win over the Princeton Tigers on Thursday afternoon.

After Notre Dame's Matt Farrell missed the front end of a one-and-one with a 59-58 lead, Princeton had a chance to win on its final possession. Devin Cannady missed an open three-pointer, and Notre Dame's Steve Vasturia pulled down the rebound and was fouled.

"We gave everybody a show, right?" Notre Dame coach Mike Brey said. "We escaped. We've been in a lot of games like that where game situations need a big defensive stop. We've been there. I'm proud we're still alive."

Farrell appeared stunned after the game. He wore a scowl as he

nearly left the floor through the wrong exit after Cannady's miss.

Farrell finished with 16 points but in a game the Fighting Irish (26-9) nearly squandered an 11-point second half lead. They also led 59-54 with 1:10 left.

Spencer Weisz led Princeton with 15 points. The Ivy League champion Tigers (23-7) had a 19-game winning streak going into the NCAA Tournament.

"We had a shot," Princeton coach Mitch Henderson said. "Right now, this one hurts. When you're in the locker-room, it's hard to say a proper 'Thank you,' because it feels like good-bye."

At Milwaukee, another 12th-seeded team was able to pull off the upset.

Middle Tennessee took down a Big Ten team in

the NCAA Tournament for the second straight year, beating Minnesota 81-72.

Middle Tennessee defeated Michigan State as a No. 15 seed last March.

This time around, the Blue Raiders (31-4) played like seasoned NCAA veterans with the way they held off the Gophers' comeback attempt from a 17-point deficit.

They will move on to face No. 4 seed Butler in the South's second round on Saturday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

No matter how it looked, we got the win and that's all that matters.

Notre Dame's Bonzie Colson

First round in pictures

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES



1 Middle Tennessee, a 12th seed, beat fifth-seeded Minnesota 81-72 in the tournament's first upset.

2 Gonzaga coasted to a 66-46 win over South Dakota State.

3 Northwestern edged Vanderbilt 68-66 in its tournament debut.

4 West Virginia defeated Bucknell 86-80.



PROBE

Fernandez could have faced charges

Miami Marlins pitcher Jose Fernandez was the "probable" operator of a speeding boat that crashed into a Miami Beach jetty on Sept. 25, killing the baseball star and two other men, according to a report issued Thursday by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, which investigated the accident.

The 46-page report included a seating chart that had Fernandez at the helm, based on "physical evidence" collected during the investigation, including the pitcher's fingerprints and DNA on the steering wheel and throttle and projection of his body as he was thrown from the boat. It also listed drugs and alcohol as factors in the crash.

Fernandez's 32-foot Sea Vee hit Miami's Government Cut north jetty at 65.7 m.p.h. just



Jose Fernandez GETTY IMAGES

after 3 a.m. on Sept. 25, the report said. Fernandez and the boat's other occupants — Emilio Jesus Macias, 27, and Eduardo Rivero, 25 — were ejected.

Investigators concluded that had Fernandez survived the crash, he could have been charged with multiple crimes, including boating under the influence manslaughter; vessel homicide; and reckless or careless operation of a vessel.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Scherzer back on bump but likely to miss Opening Day

NL Cy Young Award winner Max Scherzer probably will miss the Washington Nationals' opener against Miami on April 3 because of a stress fracture in his right ring finger.

The stress fracture had caused Scherzer to change the grip on his fastball, placing three fingers on top of the ball instead of two, but he went back to his old grip Thursday during his first game action this year, a three-inning stint in a minor league exhibition against New York Mets' Triple-A players.

"That's the really good news today," said Scherzer, who struck out five. "It's good to be back to the normal grip.... Now I feel back." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fractured elbow costs Wade remainder of season

Chicago Bulls star Dwyane Wade will miss the rest of the season with a fractured right elbow.

The Bulls said an MRI revealed the fracture. Wade

was injured in the fourth quarter of the game against the Memphis Grizzlies on Wednesday night. He collided with Grizzlies forward Zach Randolph and said after the game that he felt his elbow pop.

Wade averaged 18.6 points and 4.5 rebounds in his first season with his hometown Bulls. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Dwyane Wade GETTY IMAGES

EUROPA LEAGUE

Pogba goes down as United advances

Manchester United's progress to the Europa League quarter-finals came at a cost after Paul Pogba hobbled off hurt in its 1-0 win over Rostov on Thursday.

The world's most expensive player pulled up off the ball in the 47th minute at Old Trafford and slumped to the ground with an apparent right hamstring problem.

It proved to be a tough night for United against a Russian team that defended deeply and played on the counterattack in search of the away goal it needed following a 1-1 draw in the first leg.

Juan Mata scored the only goal, tapping home at the far post in the 70th after Zlatan Ibrahimovic flicked on a right-wing cross from Henrikh

ROUND OF 16 2nd Leg



United wins 2-1 on aggregate

Mkhitaryan.

Ibrahimovic struck two shots against the post in the first half.

United is taking the Europa League seriously as the competition offers a route into the Champions League. United is sixth in the English Premier League, with only the top four securing Champions League qualification.

The English team's biggest rival in Europe's second-tier competition might be Lyon.

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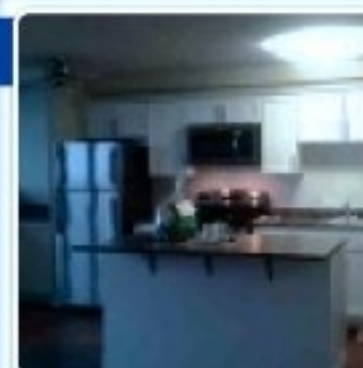
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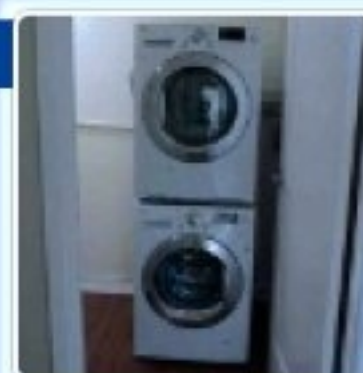
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| 9 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 8 |
| 3 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 4 |

ACROSS

- The _____ Never Stops
- When you have a fling with your wife's friend
- When she gets pregnant
- When your wife finds out

DOWN

- When your wife leaves you
- And wants half your pub.
- Weeknights at 7:30 on CBC

CORONATION ST.

★ IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

♈ Aries March 21 - April 20

Today will have some challenges, because whatever you do, you will encounter obstacles. You might feel like you're behind the 8-ball. Good luck.

♉ Taurus April 21 - May 21

Your efforts with a group, or perhaps a friend, will be stymied because of some kind of limitation. It could be financial. There's not enough money in the coffers.

♊ Gemini May 22 - June 21

You are high-viz right now. Nevertheless, a partner or close friend might object to what you want to do. This will create problems for you. Easy does it.

♋ Cancer June 22 - July 23

Do not get involved in discussions about religion, politics or racial issues today, because an authority figure will overrule you or shut you down. Just keep a low profile.

♌ Leo July 24 - Aug. 23

Your plans to investigate how to share or divide something likely will be met with resistance. Not everyone is ready to endorse your ideas. Perhaps you should wait another day?

♍ Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23

No matter what you try to do to break out of your rut, some kind of barrier will hold you back today. This is a poor day to ask for permission or an endorsement. Don't ask for anything.

♎ Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23

A boss or authority figure at work might squelch your plans. This is why you seem to be world-weary at work today. Just keep on trucking, one day at a time.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22

Children might add increased responsibility today. Plus, plans to socialize and have fun will be met with obstacles. Something will hold you back.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21

This is not a good day to ask for permission or anything from a parent or an older family member. His or her answer will be "Talk to the hand."

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20

It's easy to fall into worry mode today. Remember: "Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but gets you nowhere."

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19

Your finances look a bit bleak today. (Why is there always so much month left at the end of the money?) And so it goes.

♓ Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20

You cannot ignore your duties and responsibilities today. It's just a fact. Don't try to break free. Just suck it up and do what is expected.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

| | | | | | | | | |
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| | 6 | 9 | | | | 2 | 8 | |
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MAKE IT TONIGHT

Decadent Chinese 5-Spice Chocolate Chip Skillet Cookie



PHOTO: MAYA WISNEY

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada



You need a chocolate-y splurge that will herald the weekend and this skillet cookie rises to the challenge.

Ready in minutes

Prep time: minutes
Cook time: minutes
Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup melted coconut oil (you can also use butter)
- 1 1/2 cups spelt flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp Chinese 5 spice
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350.

In an 8-inch oven proof skillet, add coconut oil and place it in the oven to melt. Remove skillet and pour out the melted oil into a glass measuring cup, leaving behind enough to grease your pan; set aside to cool.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, Chinese 5-Spice and salt. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg and then add the sugars and extract. Stir until blended. Add the coconut oil and mix until blended. Pour the sugar mixture into the flour and mix until combined.

3. Scrape batter into prepared skillet making sure it is evenly distributed. Bake cookie for 18 to 20 minutes or until outer edges are browned and puffed. Let cool in the skillet. Serve in skillet or turn out; cut into wedges.

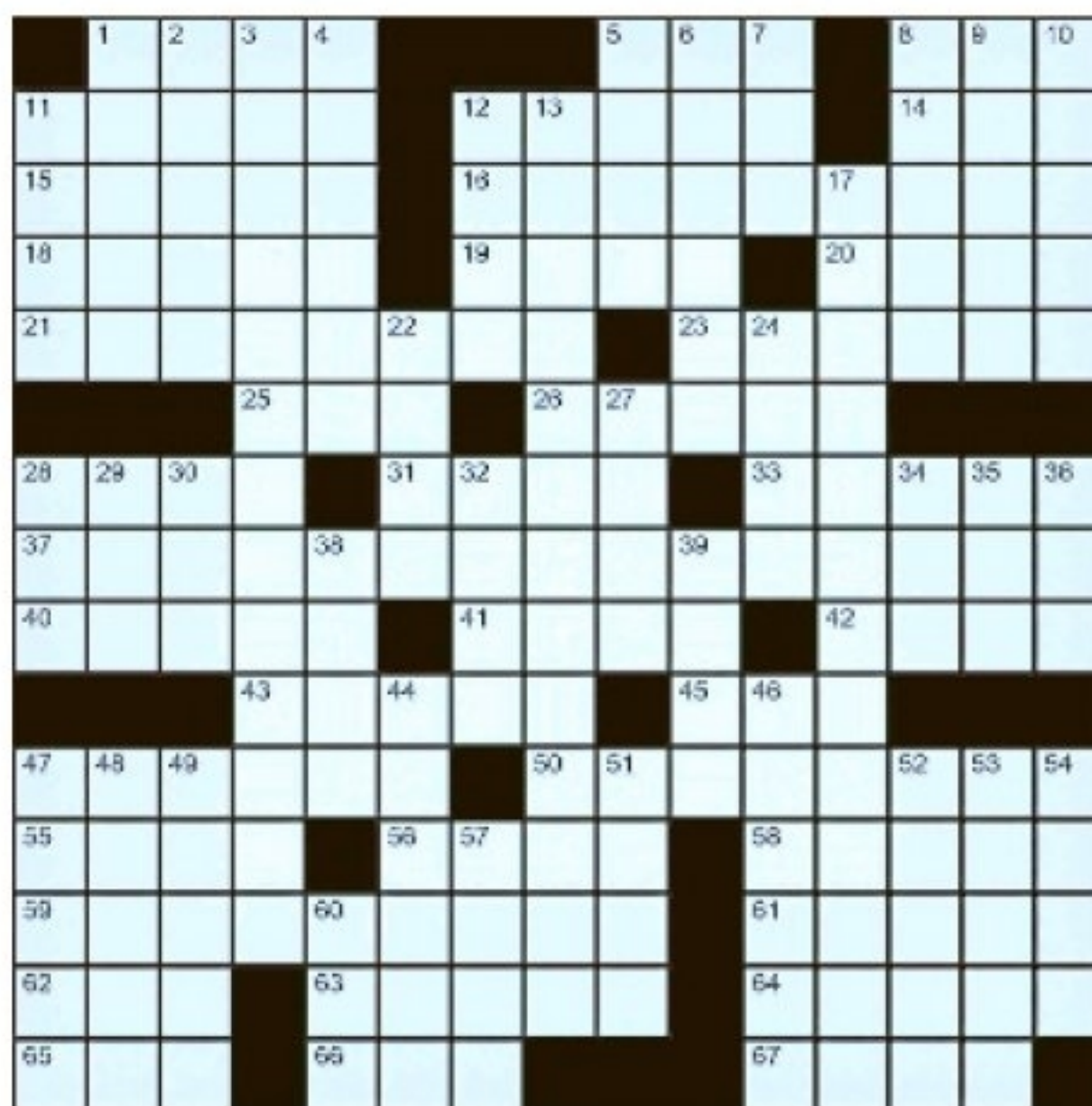
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CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN

ACROSS

1. Vault
5. Initials-sharers of Tina Fey's frequent co-star
8. 'Free' suffix
11. Irish actor Mr. Farrell
12. Attempt
14. Chemical suffix
15. Latin for 'in the meantime' [abbr.]: 2 wds.
16. Effects everlastingness
18. 'Sleep'-meaning prefix
19. Info-finding documents, e.g.
20. Harness
21. Ireland, poetically
23. Isolate, as a stranded castaway
25. 'Earth'-meaning prefix
26. Quizzes
28. 'Ranch' suffix
31. A Doll's House wife
33. Important invention
37. 1911 work by Irish dramatist George Bernard Shaw: 3 wds.
40. Does better than B+: wd. + letter
41. American univ.
42. Not in use
43. Work the eggs in the bowl
45. US politics elephant gr.
47. Run by the other runner again
50. New __ (Period when archaeological site the Ceide Fields in County Mayo in Ireland



55. "May __ you a question?"
56. "...__ you want pizza instead?" (Take-out query)
58. Better skilled
59. Potpie morsels: 2 wds.
61. Profits

62. Shiba __ (Non sporting dog)
63. Some electronics
64. Provide, as with some trait
65. Father
66. Fuss
67. Nutrition amts.

DOWN

1. "Me too.": 3 wds.
2. Out on __ (Not in one's comfort zone)
3. Book of 1939 by Irish author James Joyce: 2 wds.
4. Complete
5. Buy __ of dishes (Expand one's

6. Analyzes
7. Prefix with 'thesis'
8. Stupefies
9. Barbara of "Gone with the Wind" (1939)
10. Intervening, in law
11. Money
12. Prefix to 'ferous'

- (Conveying air)
13. Annual parade in March in cities such as Montreal and Toronto: 3 wds.
17. Music group, perhaps marching in an event such as #13-Down: 3 wds.
22. Montreal refusals
24. Food package abbr.: 2 wds.
27. 'Grey' tea
28. Alphabet trio
29. Actress, Charlotte __
30. Chg. card percentage
32. Beatles: "Two __"
34. Yore
35. 'Ether' suffix
36. Caustic stuff
38. Derisive cries!
39. Palm starch
44. Crustacean that has 14 legs
46. Hurling siege engine of ancient Rome
47. Unyielding
48. Make money, __ living
49. Pretension person
51. Flip a coin
52. Village in southeast Saskatchewan
53. Class/sort, in biology
54. Gaelic
57. Home contractor's gig
60. US intelligence org.

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WEEKNIGHTS 7:30

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